

Coming Home by TheAddict4Dramatics

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Summary: 'He could feel her body temperature rise under his palms and he smiled to himself. Somehow it felt like an honour to be the one that gets to warm her up, hold her, comfort her, kiss her. He wanted to call himself a sappy shit because that was what he had surely become but somehow he did not care in the slightest. As long as he kept getting to do it.' Hopelessly fluffy Joyce/Hopper

Coming Home

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Coming Home

Hopper took a long sigh as he closed the door behind him. It was *good* to be home. It had been one of those days where nothing in particular and everything in general had gone wrong. He was tired and it was late. So late in fact that everyone had gone to bed, hopefully long gone to bed too. The house was quiet and dark but for a muted glow created by the lamps Joyce had left on for him.

He headed through living room and straight to El's room. *Jane's* room. He had to keep reminding himself. She wanted to be called Jane from now on and he wanted to grant her her request but old habits die hard and he'd spend the last year calling her El.

Hopper opened the door just a crack, as quietly as he could manage as to not disturb her. Thankfully, she was entirely out for the count, head thrown carelessly away from him in deep slumber and her arm flung above her. She looked peaceful, truly peaceful and the sight brought an involuntary smile to his face. After everything that had happened she deserved some peace at least and he was beyond thankful she appeared to be finally getting it here in the makeshift family he and Joyce had made.

He moved to the next room down the hall now occupied by Will and Jonathan. If the older boy minded having to move into his younger brother's room when Hop and El came to stay here then he never showed any sign of it. Hop was truly grateful for that. But then Jonathan spent less and less time at the house and more and more time at the Wheeler's so he wasn't sure it made much difference to him.

He opened the door just the same, trying to be as quiet as possible, and saw Will in his bed in a similar state of deep sleep. Jonathan was awake, sitting up in bed reading, with his Walkman playing softly through his headphones. He took them off when he spotted Hop at

the door.

"You okay?" Hopper whispered, his voice was even more gruff than usual due to the strong tiredness he was feeling that was spreading to more and more of his body as the seconds went by.

"Yeah good. You? It's late." Jonathan responded in the same hushed tone. He didn't voice his concern but it was there all the same. Hopper smiled again.

"I'm good, just one of those nights... thought I'd never get away. Goodnight, don't stay up too late yeah? You've got school tomorrow."

"Yeah I know, *dad*." Jonathan answered sarcastically. He was clearly teasing but there's genuine warmth there too and it caused an unexpected warmth to spike deep in the pit of Hopper's stomach.

Jonathan was not a kid. He was a grown man that would be going to college next summer. The last thing he needed was some guy coming into his house and trying to be the father he's never really had. But Hopper liked to think Jonathan knew he could come to him if he needed too, that he could rely on him to be there, not just for him but for Will and Joyce too.

Hopper didn't say any of that in that moment of course. Instead he flipped him the bird, with just as much sarcasm, noted Jonathan's genuine smile in response and closed the door again.

He moved across the hall to the master bedroom and slipped inside the room as quietly as he could. Joyce had left a lamp on in the room so he could see her form on the bed, turned away from him and huddled into a ball, clearly asleep. He watched her for a couple of moments, listening to her slow, deep breathing as he let the stresses of the day slowly ebb away from him. Just being in the room with her, quiet and shut off from the rest of the world seemed to be enough to relax him these days.

He undressed quickly and silently until he was down to his underwear. He knew he should get ready for bed properly, maybe get some food, brush his teeth and he knew he'd certainly regret not going to the bathroom, when in the middle of the night the need to

go would surely wake him. But right then all he wanted to do was pull back the covers, gather Joyce close to him and fall into a deep and dreamless sleep.

He was as gentle as he could be but he was not exactly the world's smallest man and Joyce's cheap and aging bed was not as soft as it could be. She stirred in her sleep as he settled down behind her and reached his arms around her waist. It amazed him that he had just come in from the late-night autumn air whilst she had been tucked up under a duvet for at least a couple of hours and still he was the warm one and she the one that felt frozen. He'd never met anyone that was as psychically cold as Joyce was, all of the time.

"Hop..?" She slurred the question in her half sleep and he almost laughed – exactly who else was she expecting to be crawling into her bed in the middle of the night?

"Yeah, it's just me." He answered quietly instead as he moved his large hands in random patterns across the skin of her stomach and thighs in an attempt to warm her up a little.

"What time is it?"

"It's late. Go back to sleep sweetheart." He told her gently. She sighs sleepily and for a moment he thought she'd fallen back asleep but then she said, or more accurately yawned:

"Everything alright?"

"All good." He reassured her and she hummed in response.

"That feels nice..." Joyce murmured as his hands continued their aimless wandering.

He could feel her body temperature rise under his palms and he smiled to himself. Somehow it felt like an honour to be the one that gets to warm her up, hold her, comfort her, kiss her. He wanted to call himself a sappy shit because that was what he had surely become but somehow he did not care in the slightest. As long as he kept getting to do it. Hopper leant forward slightly and placed a light kiss to the side of her neck, right where it joined her shoulder.

"You sure everything's alright?" Joyce repeated her earlier question, this time turning her head towards him slightly so she could see him out of the corner of her eye. He still looked blurry in her half-awake mind.

"It's all fine, promise..." And after a small pause he continued, his voice even quieter than before. "I just like coming home to you, that's all."

He heard more than saw the smile of her response and the movement caused yet another yawn to escape from her that she covered lazily with the back of her hand.

"Well good," she answered almost dreamily, "because I like you coming home to me too."

He was asleep within seconds – a good, deep, dreamless sleep just as he wanted. It was all just as he wanted.